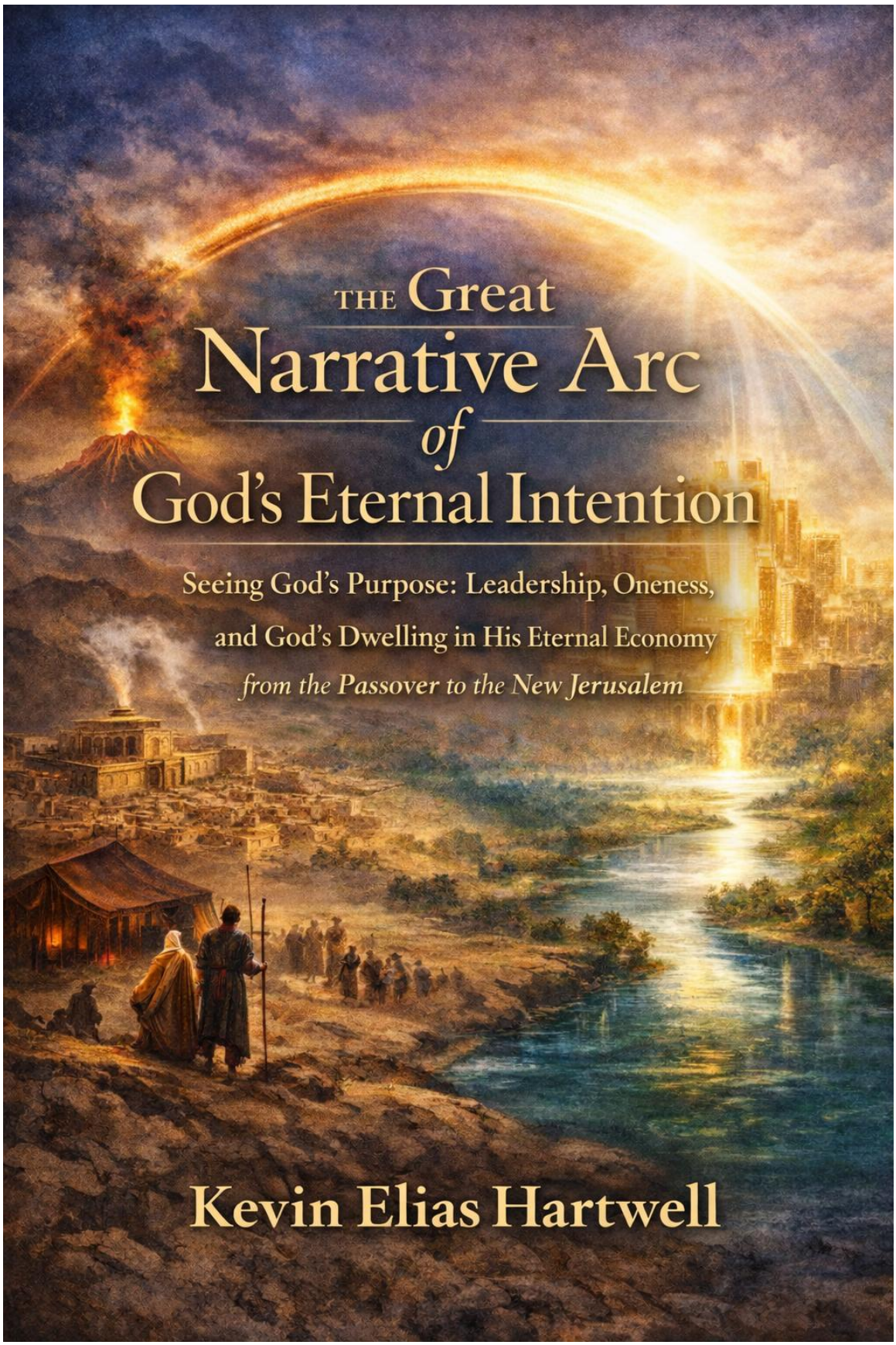
THE Great
Narrative Arc
of
God's Eternal Intention
Seeing God's Purpose: Leadership, Oneness,
and God's Dwelling in His Eternal Economy
from the Passover to the New Jerusalem
Kevin Elias Hartwell

The Great Narrative Arc of God's Eternal Intention

Seeing God's Purpose: Leadership, Oneness, and God's Dwelling in His Eternal Economy from the Passover to the New Jerusalem

By Kevin Elias Hartwell

Table of Contents

Introduction
I. The Old Testament Pattern — From Egypt to the Temple
II. Oneness — The Governing Requirement Throughout
III. Leadership — God's Chosen Vessel
IV. The New Testament Fulfillment — Christ and the Church
V. Eating, Loving, and Oneness — The Non-Negotiables
VI. Proper Leadership Today — A Necessary Discernment
VII. The Apostolic Safeguard — Look Away Unto Jesus
VIII. The Final Consummation — The New Jerusalem
Concluding Word

Introduction

The Bible reveals one continuous and unbroken purpose running from Genesis to Revelation: God's desire to gain a dwelling place among men through Christ, expressed corporately in the church, and consummated in the New Jerusalem. This purpose is not revealed all at once, but progressively—first in shadow and type in the Old Testament, then in reality and fulfillment in the New Testament. From the exodus out of Egypt to the building of the temple in Jerusalem, and from Christ's incarnation to the unveiling of the New Jerusalem, Scripture unfolds a single divine economy. At the heart of this economy are three governing matters: Christ as life to be enjoyed, the oneness of God's people to be preserved, and proper leadership that brings God's people into God's goal. To see this line is to understand the Bible itself; to walk in it is to satisfy both God and man.

I. The Old Testament Pattern — From Egypt to the Temple

From Exodus through 1 Kings, God reveals a divinely ordered progression that governs His work with His people. Egypt signifies the world system with its pleasures, culture, and apparent security, yet also with its bondage, tyranny, and death. God's people lived in Egypt, enjoyed its benefits, yet were enslaved by its power

By God's mercy, redemption came through the Passover lamb, typifying Christ. The blood sheltered the people from judgment, but it was the eating of the lamb that supplied strength for the exodus. Redemption was not merely objective; Christ had to be received inwardly. The crossing of the Red Sea typifies baptism—public identification with Christ as Redeemer and Deliverer. God gained not merely forgiven individuals, but a redeemed people, separated from the old realm.

The wilderness was God's appointed environment to remove Egypt from the soul. Though redeemed, the people still carried inward Egypt—murmuring, self-confidence, fear, and independence. Here God revealed the tabernacle, His portable dwelling place. The people and the tabernacle moved together under the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. Christ was eaten daily as manna and drunk as water from the smitten rock. Oneness was preserved by one center, one presence, and one supply. Yet the wilderness was never God's goal; it was a place of transition, not settlement.

The Good Land signifies Christ in His unsearchable riches. Upon entering the land, the manna ceased and the people began to enjoy the rich produce of the land. Enemies were defeated, portions were allotted, and the people were settled. Only then did God choose Jerusalem as the place of His name, where under Solomon the temple was built—God's permanent dwelling in type. Thus, the consummation from Exodus to 1 Kings is unmistakable: God gains a dwelling place among a redeemed, transformed, and united people.

II. Oneness — The Governing Requirement Throughout

Oneness is not optional in God's economy; it is essential. In the wilderness there was one tabernacle and one testimony. In the land there was one chosen place and one altar. In Jerusalem there was one city and one temple.

After Joshua, leadership failed and oneness collapsed. Scripture records the tragic condition that everyone did what was right in his own eyes. This was not merely moral failure; it was the loss of a governing center. The result was confusion, decline, and the absence of God's dwelling. This condition mirrors much of Christianity today—many sincere believers, much activity, yet fragmentation, division, and no corporate testimony.

God recovered His purpose through David, a man after God's heart, who established Jerusalem as the center of a unified kingdom. His son Solomon consummated this recovery by building the temple and praying a prayer that unveiled God's desire to dwell among His people.

III. Leadership — God's Chosen Vessel

Leadership is decisive in God's economy. Moses embraced God Himself and God's word and led the people under God's immediate presence from Egypt through the wilderness. Joshua faithfully continued Moses' vision and brought the people into possession of the land. After Joshua, leadership failed, and God's purpose stalled. David recovered oneness and the center of God's testimony, and Solomon consummated God's purpose in building.

God advances only through leadership that embraces God Himself, submits to God's word, preserves oneness, and leads God's people toward God's dwelling. This principle does not change in the New Testament.

IV. The New Testament Fulfillment — Christ and the Church

What was shadow in the Old Testament becomes reality from Matthew to Revelation. This divine economy is carried out through what Jesus Christ passed through and what He became.

Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man. As God, He is the source of divine life and the expression of God. As man, He entered human history, lived a genuine human life, suffered, and died an all-inclusive death on the cross for our sins. His precious blood was shed, satisfying God's righteousness, cleansing the believers, and silencing every accusation of Satan, who hates the blood because it strips him of all legal ground.

Christ was buried, resurrected, and ascended to the right hand of God. In resurrection He became the life-giving Spirit, and on the day of Pentecost He was poured out upon the believers, imparting Himself into them as life and power.

This processed and dispensed Christ is now the indwelling life of the church, the content of the Body, and the constituent of the New Jerusalem. He is the Pneumatic Christ — Christ as the Spirit — who has passed through incarnation, human living, death, resurrection, and ascension, and is now available to be received, enjoyed, and lived out by the believers for God's building.

The Allotted Portion — Christ as the Believers' Inheritance

Paul's word in Colossians 1 concerning the allotted portion of the saints in the light deliberately echoes the allotments of the Good Land. Christ Himself is now the unique inheritance of God's people, yet each believer enjoys a real and particular portion of Him within the one corporate possession.

Peter confirms this same principle when he speaks of believers having been allotted like precious faith. Faith itself is God's measured provision enabling the saints to enjoy Christ. Thus, Christ is the universal inheritance, faith is the allotted means of enjoyment, and the church is the corporate sphere in which this inheritance is possessed and expressed.

Colossians 2 — Christ as the Reality and the End of Substitutes

Paul gathers all of this into concentrated form in Colossians 2:8–17. In Christ, believers were circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him, and raised together with Him. Through His blood God forgave all our offenses, wiped out the handwriting in ordinances, and nailed it to the cross.

In doing so, Christ stripped off the rulers and authorities and made a public display of them. Thus, religious regulations, human philosophy, and spiritual powers alike have been judged. What remains is Christ Himself — for the body, the substance, the reality of every positive thing is of Christ.

This is why Paul sounds a warning. Anything that distracts from Christ, even if it appears spiritual, profound, or scriptural, robs believers of the very Christ they possess. The danger is not heresy alone, but substitution.

The sober reality is that in Christianity today many believers are being defrauded of their rightful enjoyment of Christ through long-standing religious notions and unscriptural practices. Though often sincere and well-intentioned, these substitutes divert believers from Christ Himself as their unique portion and reality.

V. Eating, Loving, and Oneness — The Non-Negotiables

At every stage in God's economy, certain matters are absolute: eating and drinking Christ, loving Christ first without rival, loving one another with brotherly love, and guarding and pursuing the oneness of God's testimony. Where these are present, God builds; where they are absent, God's purpose is delayed.

VI. Proper Leadership Today — A Necessary Discernment

This question cannot be emphasized enough: are people being led to Christ, or are they being led to a gifted person? Many today are drawn by teachers who may indeed be talented, articulate, charming, charismatic, and gifted, yet do not lead people into the enjoyment of Christ as life, the oneness of the Body, or the practical local church expression.

Gift itself is not the issue; direction is. Ministries that gather people to personalities, platforms, or movements may appear successful, but they do not produce God's dwelling.

VII. The Apostolic Safeguard — Look Away Unto Jesus

The apostles consistently pointed believers to Christ, not to themselves. Paul refused to allow gifted speaking to replace Christ as the center and warned that some would draw disciples after themselves.

In Hebrews, Christ is presented as superior to everything, and the exhortation is clear and decisive: look away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith. Anything—even gifted ministry—that distracts from Christ, diminishes the Body, or ignores the local church does not serve God's economy.

VIII. The Final Consummation — The New Jerusalem

What the temple in Jerusalem was in type, the church is in reality today. And what the church is today in reality will consummate as the New Jerusalem—God and man fully mingled, built together, and dwelling together eternally. Many portions, one Christ; many saints, one city; God and man at rest together forever.

Concluding Word

God's purpose has never changed. From the Passover in Egypt to the temple in Jerusalem, and from Christ's incarnation to the New Jerusalem, God has been moving toward one goal: a corporate dwelling place where He and His redeemed people are fully one. This purpose is advanced only through Christ enjoyed as life, oneness preserved among God's people, and leadership that faithfully brings believers to Christ and into the Body. Anything that substitutes personality for Christ, division for oneness, or activity for building may appear successful for a time, but it cannot fulfill God's economy. **The call today is sober and urgent: look away unto Jesus, pursue the oneness of His Body, live the church life in your locality, and move with God toward His eternal consummation—the New Jerusalem.**